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venture

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Island *builder*

Metzler Contracting has built single-family homes in Hawaii for 30 years. But building on the islands is not always paradise. *Metzler Contracting Co. page 8*

Just Keep Moving

Why Denver takes a business approach to transportation. *RTD Denver page 22*

Quantum Leap

How outsourcing can take a company to the global level. *page 4*

Island *builder*

Hanna Aronovich Since 1976, Metzler Contracting Co. has been building single-family homes in Hawaii. Despite a setting of natural beauty, island construction does present challenges.

Metzler Contracting Co.'s primary focus is "architecturally challenging single-family projects [that] use the very best and latest methods and materials."





John Metzler says the impact of construction trends tend to be delayed in Hawaii. However, the founder and owner of Metzler Contracting Co. notes the impact of cost increases in materials and fuel have been hitting the state more rapidly and severely than other current issues.

"Because our materials travel such great distances to reach us, the petroleum fuels expended add to the cost of manufacture, trucking, handling and storage," Metzler explains. "Hawaii is also subject to federal shipping regulations, which tend to increase the cost of doing business here. The Hawaiian Islands are the most isolated landmasses on the planet, geographically speaking. This means that not only domestic materials are subject to higher energy costs, but the materials that we source from all over the world are impacted, as well.

"At any one time, we have container loads of materials coming to us from China, India, Thailand, Australia, Europe, Japan, Indonesia and the U.S. mainland, to name but a few."

Metzler also points out Metzler Contracting cannot enjoy the economies of scale that benefit larger marketplaces, and local manpower resources are often stretched.

"We rely more heavily on our partners," such as subcontractors, suppliers, architects, engineers, designers and other service providers, he adds.

Strong relationships with its partners help Metzler Contracting succeed. "Our partnerships are forged over years of time and hundreds of projects," Metzler says. "Architects, engineers, interior designers, landscape designers and governmental officials like working with us because they know that we can achieve the intended outcome – their expectations are met or exceeded. Many design professionals trust us not only to execute their designs, but to add to them and refine them in a way that only our dedicated professionals and hard work can achieve."

Suppliers, subcontractors and other service providers appreciate Metzler Contracting's billing and quick-pay processes. Metzler



says upfront contracts and tight documentation keep errors and oversights to a minimum.

Purchase orders are clear and concise, and processed in a day or two. "This gives us a key position in the area and the opportunity to work with the very best vendors, all of whom appreciate the value that we place on our long-term associations with them," Metzler adds.

Decades of Experience

Metzler Contracting is built on the dedication and experience of its team. John Metzler was born and raised in New Mexico, the son and grandson of engineering, business and ranching families. He studied engineering at the University of New Mexico, made the move to Honolulu in 1970 and relocated to

the island of Hawaii in 1973. He worked in the building trades at the fledgling resort properties on the Kohala Coast, and founded his company in 1976.

"We started building custom homes on the island before there were a lot of resort properties and large-scale custom homes," Metzler says. "We would build, say, one high-end custom home and two or three more modest custom homes in the same year. As the island got more popular, we began moving more and more toward the larger projects."

From its early days as a custom homebuilder, the company has evolved into its present form – as one that builds exclusively in Hawaiian resort communities.

Metzler's services include architect/client introduction, pre-

construction services, turnkey construction and limited property management for select clients. Metzler says the company can build and manage up to 25 projects simultaneously, "of anywhere from \$3 million to \$45 million in construction contract value."

The company also has a development arm, which works to develop subdivision communities in various areas of the island.

The company's primary focus, its owner says, is "architecturally challenging single-family projects [that] use the very best and latest methods and materials." Metzler Contracting is "a market leader in the field of research and development of innovative systems and materials to create unique details and operational features for each of the homes we build," he says.



Metzler Contracting targets buyers looking for second or vacation homes. "Our clients are mostly high-net-worth individuals who have impeccable taste and expect the very best quality and durability in their homes," Metzler explains. "These homebuyers typically employ architects and interi-

or designers who have the high standards of design and detail necessary to maintain the reputations which they have earned over many years in the design and construction industry.

"Value is not a foreign concept to our clients and they appreciate our attention to providing the

absolute best value without giving up one ounce of quality or durability in the process. This attention gives our company a very close relationship with our clients, for the most part."

Metzler Contracting recently completed two oceanfront homes that are "the talk of the town," Metzler says.

"These are world-class in design and execution, very large in size and are located on the very best property available," he adds. "At the core of these homes is their location. Fronting the Pacific Ocean and a white sand beach, the homes are part of exclusive resort properties where security and amenities are without parallel."

Although oceanfront property is often desired, Metzler points out it creates special building challenges.

Working beneath sea level to build a footing, swimming pool or basement means the builder must pay close attention to "unusual circumstances," Metzler says. "Pouring concrete under water, dewatering of excavations, special waterproofing, redundant pumping systems and many more uncommon, very technical and innovative solutions become a part of building an otherwise normal-looking residence."

Family Atmosphere

Metzler says the company fosters a family culture. The project management teams have control over the "family of employees and vendors and direct their actions on the individual project sites," he notes. "These teams, however, have direct access to the home office through high-speed computer connections to our server, phone and e-mail, which gives them real-time reporting and



Metzler Contracting Co.'s development arm works to develop subdivision communities in various areas of Hawaii.

accounting data, document control and access to company and client information."

Many employees are loyal to Metzler Contracting, he says, working with the company until retirement. Employee celebrations and informal gatherings help solidify the unity among employees.

"It isn't unusual for 200 to 300 employees and their families to show up at our regular bowling night, for instance, where we rent an entire bowling alley and restaurant for a night of family fun," Metzler explains. "Another annual event is our annual sponsorship of the Relay for Life put on by the American Cancer Society.

"Again, our employees and

their families get together to walk through the night to raise funds for this worthy cause."

Many Highlights

In addition to social and fundraising events, Metzler says the last year has brought many highlights. The company created more high-quality homes in the area than any other builder, "while maintaining our position as a market leader in the research and development of innovative systems and materials to create unique details and operational features for each of the homes we build," Metzler says.

"We have exceeded our dedication to community service by supporting more charities and

community organizations than ever before and at a higher level of giving," he adds.

"Finally, last year we had more inquiries than ever before from architects, designers, engineers and homebuyers from out of state asking us how we achieve a particular detail or effect in our buildings," he continues.

"This tells us that we have kept ahead of the competition and our products have garnered the attention of people who appreciate quality and excellence."

In the coming years, Metzler Contracting plans to grow at about 5 percent a year and continue broadening its portfolio of properties, employees, clients and design partners. ■